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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF LAND USE COORDINATION

Flood Control
Washington, D. C.

January 10, 1942

MEMORANDUM NO. 71

MEMORANDUM FOR FLOOD CONTROL FIELD REPRESENTATIVES OF SOIL
CONSERVATION SERVICE, FOREST SERVICE, AND BUREAU OF AGRI-
CULTURAL ECONOMICS. (Through S.C.S., F.S. & B.A.E.)

Subject: Release of information

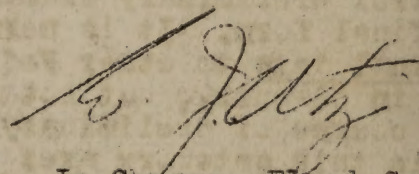
Experience gained during the past two or three years indicates need for some modification and amplification of the flood control policy outlined in a memorandum dated May 1, 1938, with regard to releasing to other agencies data collected in flood control preliminary examinations and surveys. With the increasing emphasis on correlation of all agricultural activities and the increased effort to eliminate duplication and reduce costs in the collection of data and the development of plans, it is not in the public interest to withhold valuable basic data on watershed conditions until the flood control reports are submitted to Congress. Many of these basic data are collected with the cooperation and assistance of other Federal and local agencies, and in other cases relate directly to studies that are made by such agencies.

Our future policy will be to release as much of the information we have collected as possible at the times when it will be of most value -- which is often before the flood control preliminary examination and survey reports are put in final form. It is permissible, therefore, to release factual data to other Federal and local agencies for their use in planning, but not for publication, at any time during the course of preliminary examinations and surveys. Included in this category are: (1) generalized cover maps; (2) generalized soil maps; (3) road maps showing roads, homes, public lands, etc.; (4) land classification maps; (5) summaries of farm schedules; (6) composite maps showing complexes classified on the basis of cover, slope, and erosion; (7) economic analyses and trends in land use changes and similar factual data. Of course, general information on measures effective in reducing erosion and run-off, such as fire control, terracing, strip cropping and contour cultivation, can be discussed and used. Amounts proposed, costs, specific location, and the like, as proposed in the remedial program, should not be given out. In no case should our evaluation figures on benefits be given out before the reports are completed. Information on the conclusions reached from the factual data and the specifically recommended or contemplated flood control program is to be kept confidential and not released until the reports are out in final form and are submitted to the Congress.

Unpublished data collected by other agencies but used by us in flood control should be released only by such other agency or with their approval. In no event are Agriculture employees to release information obtained from the War Department investigations prior to the submission of the reports to Congress without the approval of the War Department District Engineer in whose district the study was made. Generally any requests for information contained in the War Department reports before they are submitted to Congress should be referred to the District Engineer. Similar care should be exercised with regard to information supplied by the Reclamation Service.

Written reports on surveys or negative preliminary examinations, whether made under direct authorization of Congress or at the request of Committees of Congress as expressed through formal resolutions, are considered confidential until their final transmission to Congress or the Committee in question, has been accomplished. This is essential because in many cases the preliminary examination and survey reports describe contemplated or recommended programs of other agencies, and we are not at liberty to reveal information on such programs until the responsible agency makes the information public.

Members of Congress are accorded opportunity, if desired, to read the reports prior to their transmission, subject to the understanding that the contents thereof will not be made public.



In Charge, Flood Control
Office of Land Use Coordination